

TOPIC: Depression

Name: _____

Purpose of the talk: for kids to recognize depression and find some help in dealing with it.



Survey

Hand out the survey (see end of this lesson) and ask kids to fill it out anonymously. Then someone tallies the answers and shares the results.

Questions

To help the leader prepare, **possible** answers are given after each question in italics. The purpose of the discussion is for the young people to express **their** thoughts. Leaders should mostly share their ideas at the end of the discussion.

1. How are you “different from normal” when you are depressed?

No interest in doing things that are normally enjoyable; general sadness; not having energy; sleeping a lot; not wanting be with other people; trouble thinking; being pessimistic about life and the future

2. What kinds of things cause people to be depressed?

Criticism; failure; comparing with others on social media; lack of sleep; over-focus on a problem; long term stress; loss of purpose; family problems; growing up; relationship problems; fear; feeling unable to please someone; feeling unable to measure up to expectations (parents’ or own); taking on too many responsibilities

3. At what point does depression become serious?

When it goes on too long; when it negatively affects relationships with God or others; when it interferes with normal, healthy routines; when it causes nightmares; when it causes self-destructive thoughts

4. What are some bad ways of handling depression?

Sleeping too much; eating too much; spending all time on social media; substance abuse; turning against friends and family; self-harm; being unwilling to talk to anyone about it; withdrawing into self; lashing out or blaming others who are not to blame (including God)

5. What can a person do to help themselves out of depression?

(refer back to the answers from the survey)

Pray - even with no idea what to say; ask God to help; find a person to talk to; try to get proper perspective; limit social media; keep doing normal things; be open to friends; exercise, get outside, journal or write songs or anything that helps process feelings; be willing to say 'no' to overcommitment

6. How can you help a person who is depressed?

Be patient; really listen to them; don't push too hard; don't cut them out - keep spending time with them and sending texts; find special ways to show care; sometimes just try to have fun; show them how they don't have to put so much pressure on themselves

7. What are some things you shouldn't do when you're trying to help?

Tell them to 'just cheer up;' try to match their problems with one's own; tell them it's not so bad; get mad or yell at them or tell them it's no big deal; point out others have it worse

8. Is depression wrong? At what point does it become wrong?

No, emotions can't be controlled; some depression is caused by imbalances in the brain – it can be physical as much as emotional.

It's wrong to hurt other people or to turn away from God. It's also wrong to try to please people instead of God. Sinning when depressed should still be confessed, and it will still be forgiven.

9. Can you think of anything good that could come out of depression?

Becoming more sensitive to others; taking the time alone to think; becoming less judgmental of others; being forced to slow down and spend more time with God; being forced to seek answers or people who can really help; realizing what is really important and what can be changed with long-lasting benefits

10. What can we do to prevent depression?

Sleep properly; maintain connection with friends and family; go to God and trusted, wise people to talk; look for a better perspective on problems; spend less

*time on social media; eat, exercise, go out regularly; don't constantly overload schedules; realize if there is too much pressure;
Depression can't entirely be prevented. It happens to most people at some point in life, but these things can help.*

Wrap-up:

1. Depression is common as people leave the protected life of childhood and become adults.

This can become overwhelming (adult issues, the future, bigger expectations, etc.) Signs of depression can include sadness; loss of interest in things around them like school, church, friends. However, some people hide their depression under a mask of aggressiveness, excessive cheerfulness, being funny, being really busy, or alcohol and drugs.

2. How to help yourself and others in depression

Don't wait for something to change externally!

Here's five things you can do: (Use the acrostic "HOPE")

1. HELPERS –

Friends: They can be a helpful support group: Don't cut yourself off from people.

(If you are trying to help, be caring in a non-aggressive way with depressed friends.)

Adults: They can help. If you are thinking of self-harm or it's been going on too long, turn to an adult, parents or a counselor at school or church.

God can help us fight depression

He says, "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God.

I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

(Isaiah 41:10 NIV)

2. OUTLOOK - Restructure your outlook (faulty thinking). When we are depressed, our perspective is probably exaggerated. We can feel our problems are unique and worse than they are. We can also compare ourselves to others and always feel like we fall short.

- Think specifically, not in global terms. Ex. Not "I am a total jerk." But "I was a jerk at lunch today."
- Notice those around you who care and remember God really cares about you.
- Notice others around you who also have problems.
- Realize that comparing to others hardly ever makes us feel good about our lives.
- Consider limiting Social Media! It presents everyone's best side, what they want others to see. It is not fair to compare our real lives and inner struggles with someone else's social media image.

3. **POSITIVE** - Is there anything good about being down? (*Review their answers for question #9.*)

Is the glass half full or half empty?

- A. When things are truly bad, God comforts, and he “redeems.” He doesn’t say bad is good, but He can bring good out of bad things:

(Illustration of Corrie and Betsy Ten Boom):

The story is about two sisters who were in a concentration camp during World War II, Betsy and Corrie. The sisters lived in a barracks filled with fleas that were constantly biting them. One day Betsy pointed out that the Bible says to thank God for everything, and insisted they thank God for the fleas. Corrie didn’t want to, but gave in to Betsy and thanked God for the fleas.

These same two sisters had a Bible and held Bible studies with some of the women in their barracks. Somehow, the guards never came in. It was during peacetime that Corrie learned that the guards were afraid to go into the barracks because of the fleas, which meant the women were free to study the Bible and pray together.

God can use even the bad circumstances of our lives for His good.

- B. God also wants us to notice the good things around us:

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. (Philippians 4:8 NIV)

Try writing down the good things you can thank God for – these can be significant or not so significant, like “the soft light of a lamp on a dreary day.” Some people find it helps to keep a Gratitude Journal and write in it every day.

4. **EXERCISE** - Stay active and exercise. Being active helps stimulate dopamine in your brain, which helps you feel better.

Review the four points:

- H - Helpers such as friends, adults, and God
- O - Outlook, focus on others and not just yourself
- P - Positive, look for things to be thankful for
- E - Exercise – be active to help overcome depression.

3. End by affirming three people.

<p style="text-align: center;">SURVEY</p> <p>1. Have you ever been depressed? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p> <p>2. If yes, what is the <u>longest period</u> you have been depressed? <input type="checkbox"/> one day or less <input type="checkbox"/> 2-4 days <input type="checkbox"/> 5-7 days <input type="checkbox"/> more than a week <input type="checkbox"/> more than 2 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> another answer _____</p> <p>3. What helped you come out of depression?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SURVEY</p> <p>1. Have you ever been depressed? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p> <p>2. If yes, what is the <u>longest period</u> you have been depressed? <input type="checkbox"/> one day or less <input type="checkbox"/> 2-4 days <input type="checkbox"/> 5-7 days <input type="checkbox"/> more than a week <input type="checkbox"/> more than 2 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> another answer _____</p> <p>3. What helped you come out of depression?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">SURVEY</p> <p>1. Have you ever been depressed? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p> <p>2. If yes, what is the <u>longest period</u> you have been depressed? <input type="checkbox"/> one day or less <input type="checkbox"/> 2-4 days <input type="checkbox"/> 5-7 days <input type="checkbox"/> more than a week <input type="checkbox"/> more than 2 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> another answer _____</p> <p>3. What helped you come out of depression?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SURVEY</p> <p>1. Have you ever been depressed? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p> <p>2. If yes, what is the <u>longest period</u> you have been depressed? <input type="checkbox"/> one day or less <input type="checkbox"/> 2-4 days <input type="checkbox"/> 5-7 days <input type="checkbox"/> more than a week <input type="checkbox"/> more than 2 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> another answer _____</p> <p>3. What helped you come out of depression?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">SURVEY</p> <p>1. Have you ever been depressed? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p> <p>2. If yes, what is the <u>longest period</u> you have been depressed? <input type="checkbox"/> one day or less <input type="checkbox"/> 2-4 days <input type="checkbox"/> 5-7 days <input type="checkbox"/> more than a week <input type="checkbox"/> more than 2 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> another answer _____</p> <p>3. What helped you come out of depression?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SURVEY</p> <p>1. Have you ever been depressed? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p> <p>2. If yes, what is the <u>longest period</u> you have been depressed? <input type="checkbox"/> one day or less <input type="checkbox"/> 2-4 days <input type="checkbox"/> 5-7 days <input type="checkbox"/> more than a week <input type="checkbox"/> more than 2 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> another answer _____</p> <p>3. What helped you come out of depression?</p>